



## The Balkans Air Campaign Study: Part 1

COL ROBERT C. OWEN, USAF



THIS ARTICLE summarizes and suggests implications of the final report of the Balkans Air Campaign Study (BACS).<sup>1</sup> The deputy commander in chief of United States European Command, Gen James Jamerson, and the commander of Air University, Lt Gen Jay W. Kelley, chartered this study in October 1995.



Their specific charter was to “capture” the planning, execution, and results of Operation DELIBERATE FORCE, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air campaign conducted against the Bosnian Serbs between 30 August and 14 September 1995, as part of a broader international intervention into the Bosnian conflict. Their specific charters were to explore broadly the salient

events and implications of this brief but unique air campaign and to gather a comprehensive documentary and oral archive to support later in-depth research. Their intention was that the team would lay out a “mile-wide-and-foot-deep” baseline study of DELIBERATE FORCE, one aimed more at

identifying and delineating issues than at putting them to rest.

The BACS team adopted a core research question that highlighted the study's focus on the planning and execution of an air campaign: "How and with what considerations did the planners and executors of DELIBERATE FORCE link military operations with the strategic, political, and diplomatic goals they were charged to attain?" To be useful to a potentially broad audience, the answer to this question required a survey of the geopolitical, sociological, diplomatic, technological, and operational factors influencing this particular air campaign. Thus, the general organization of the study and the chapters of its report were divided into sections that primarily dealt with (1) the political and institutional context of DELIBERATE FORCE planning, (2) the actual planning of the campaign, (3) its execution, and (4) the implications of those experiences. To the extent that the report had a unifying theme, it was an effort to determine to what extent the planners and executors of DELIBERATE FORCE were cognizant of and/or wielded influence over the forces that shaped the form, execution, and effects of the air campaign. In other words, to what extent were they in charge of events, and to what extent were events in charge of them? The answer to that question, as well as others raised and to various extents answered by the BACS team, carries significant implications for the theories and doctrines of airpower strategy and planning.

### Political and Institutional Context

In an ideal world, military planners base their work on concise and clear articulations of the political and diplomatic goals set by their political leaders. If they are to organize forces, develop strategies, select intermediate objectives, and execute operations, they need to know those goals and the degree and the nature of the force they can employ

in their attainment. Although the truth of this concept likely would be transparent to any military thinker, most would also agree that the inherent complexity, chaos, and obscurities of wars and conflicts often make clear and lasting articulations of specific political and diplomatic goals difficult to formulate. In the practical world, as a consequence, military planners usually base their work on expressions of goals that are sometimes clear, sometimes obscure, and sometimes unknowable or only assumed. This mix of the knowable and the unknowable was particularly evident in the planning context of DELIBERATE FORCE. In the origins and nature of the conflict, and in the multicoalition structure of the outside intervention into it, there lay a complex and changing web of objectives, commitments, and restraints that shaped military planning, even though some of its strands were perceived only imperfectly by, or were unknown to, the planners involved.

In general terms, the proximal cause of the Bosnian conflict was the economic and political decline of the Yugoslav Federation during the 1980s. The net effect of this prolonged crisis on Yugoslavian national and provincial politics was the breakup of the country. The republics of Slovenia and Croatia left in the summer of 1991, while Bosnia and Macedonia pulled out in the winter of 1991-92. Left behind in a rump state referred to as "the former Yugoslavia" were Serbia, Vojvodina, Montenegro, and Kosovo—all under the domination of Serbia and its president, Slobodan Milosevic. The breakup was not peaceful. The Yugoslavian People's Army (JNA) fought a 10-day war in June and July 1991 to keep Slovenia in the federation, and it fought a much longer and more bitter war to quash the Croatian secession, between August 1991 and January 1992. In cooperation with the JNA, Serbian minority groups in Croatia and Bosnia fought to hold those provinces in the federation and under the pale of Milosevic or, failing that, to carve out their own ethnic enclaves (*krajinas*) for ultimate unification with "greater Serbia." All of these conflicts

were characterized by an appalling viciousness on all sides, including massacres of civilians and captured soldiers, mass robbery and rape, and scorched-earth conquests—all encapsulated in a new international term: ethnic cleansing. Dismay and disgust at that violence and its implications for regional stability prompted outside states and international organizations to intervene in the Balkans crisis in general and in Bosnia in particular.

From the perspective of the intervening states and the later planners of DELIBERATE FORCE, knowing that the Bosnian conflict sprang from the collapse of the Yugoslavian Federation provided little foundation for strategic planning. Crudely put, a political breakup, in and of itself, provides few targets against which air strategists may ply their trade. Building air strategy in the case of Bosnia required more detailed understanding of the conflict, beginning with a clear description of its sustaining causes. Sustaining causes is a term useful in this discussion to designate the forces and mechanisms that “move” a conflict from its root cause to its ultimate form. Sustaining causes drive the evolution of a conflict, sustain it, and characterize its key features, such as objectives, scope, intensity, and political dynamics. In the present discussion, the sustaining causes of the Bosnian conflict are the things that led the country’s people and leaders to take the course that they did in response to the uncertainties and fears engendered by the collapse of the existing federal political system. They had choices, after all. To resecure its future, the collective Bosnian polity could have chosen to continue the peaceful coexistence of its people in a unitary state, to divide into a Swiss-like confederation of cantons, or some other option to gross interethnic violence. Instead, Bosnians went for each other’s throats, arguably at the instigation of elements of the Serb community. Explanations as to why they did so vary, but most identify some combination of three underlying forces as the predominant cause of their choice: (1) ethnic tension, (2) inflammation of ethnic tension by

national and provincial politicians in pursuit of personal power and other political ends, and (3) a military imbalance grossly in favor of one Bosnian ethnic group—the Serbs.<sup>2</sup>

Ethnic tension may have been historically endemic to Bosnian politics, but interethnic violence was episodic. In their ancient roots in the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire, the people of Bosnia were all South Slavs. In the latter twentieth century, they still looked like each other, and they spoke dialects of the same root language. But, as

---

**In an ideal world, military planners base their work on concise and clear articulations of the political and diplomatic goals set by their political leaders.**

---

was the case for the South Slavs of the Balkans region in general, centuries of the divide-and-rule policies of their Ottoman and Hapsburg overlords, internal migration, differing religious experiences, and wars had divided Bosnians into distinct—though geographically intermixed—communities of faith and, to a lesser degree, culture. Proportionally, in 1991 the three largest ethnic groups in Bosnia were the Muslim Serbs (referred to in the report as Moslems),<sup>3</sup> Orthodox Christian Serbs, and Catholic Croats, who comprised 44 percent, 31 percent, and 18 percent of the population, respectively. Nevertheless, following the creation of Yugoslavia after World War I, these communities generally lived at peace and increasingly intermarried, particularly when times were good and the federal government was strong. But when times were tough and the central government weakened, as was the case during World War II and during the economic and political crisis of the 1980s, ethnic loyalties regained pre-eminent importance for enough Bosnians to

orient political competition and widespread violence along communal—rather than ideological, economic, or class—lines.

That ethnic chauvinism emerged as a predominant theme of Bosnian politics in the latter 1980s was to some degree the consequence of the manipulations of federal and provincial politicians. Indeed, the chronology of the Bosnian conflict has its tangible beginnings in the demagoguery of Slobadan Milosevic. Maneuvering for power, in 1987 he began using his position as president of the Yugoslavian League of Communists as a platform to whip up the ethnic pride and paranoia of the Serb community of Serbia. Milosevic's rhetoric also helped stir up Serbian groups living in the *krajina* of southwestern Croatia and in a number of smaller *krajinas* in Bosnia. By mid-1990, Croatian Serbs were committing acts of defiance and limited violence against the Croatian government. When Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in June 1991, Croatian Serbs cooperated with the JNA in an open war to crush the independence movement or at least to establish Serbian control over the *krajina*. This war ended in January 1992, with the establishment of a tense truce in the *krajina* and creation of a United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to supervise it. By that time, elements of the Bosnian Serb community, under the general if sometimes very loose leadership of Radovan Karadzic, were preparing to resist a similar declaration of independence by Bosnia. In the early months of 1991, the majority of Croats and Muslims, under the leadership of President Alija Izetbegovic, had voted for independence. Preempting that vote, Karadzic established an independent Serbian Republic. Bosnia formally withdrew from Yugoslavia in March 1992, and heavy fighting followed immediately after. Forces of the Serb Republic, with overt assistance from the JNA, advanced to expand its borders, while the relatively weak Bosnian army fought to preserve the territorial integrity and authority of its newly independent state. Within a few weeks, Serbs controlled almost two-thirds of the territory of Bosnia.

The boldness and success of the Bosnian Serbs' military offensive were consequences to some degree of their great military advantage over the Moslem and Croat factions. During 1991, a number of Serb military and paramilitary units formed in Bosnia and prepared to fight. Their preparations were helped greatly by the JNA, which remained present in the country until after independence. Before and as it withdrew, the JNA opened arsenals to Serb military units and released sympathetic personnel to join it. Meanwhile, the Bosnian government did little to arm itself. In reality, President Izetbegovic had little opportunity to do otherwise. The only significant local source of arms was the JNA, and it gave willingly only to Serbs. Moreover, the United Nations (UN) in September 1991 had imposed an arms embargo that made it difficult and expensive for the Bosnian government to import arms and materiel from the outside. Thus, when the country fractionated, the Bosnian Serbs had the will and overwhelming military power—particularly in a vast preponderance of aircraft and heavy field weapons—to advance around the northern and eastern parts of Bosnia. There they carved out an ethnic state with direct connections to Serbia proper and to the Serbian *krajina* of Croatia. In a matter of weeks, then, the Bosnian government found itself surrounded by unfriendly and mutually supporting Serbian enclaves and states.

By that time, the direct international intervention that eventually would have a crescendo in DELIBERATE FORCE was under way. Concerned with the growing violence and the possibility of intervention by Yugoslavia, several European states and the United States recognized Bosnia in April 1992, and on 20 May the UN Security Council recommended Bosnia for admission to the General Assembly. On 29 June the Security Council resolved to provide peacekeeping forces to protect the flow of humanitarian relief supplies into Sarajevo Airport, under the protection of UNPROFOR, whose charter was extended to include peace operations in Bosnia. NATO airpower became in-

volved in the region at about the same time, in the form of airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft flying in support of SHARP GUARD, a NATO and Western European Union (WEU) operation to enforce the regional arms embargo and economic sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. Direct cooperation between the UN and NATO began on 16 October, when, by prearrangement, the UN issued United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 781, banning all military flight operations over Bosnia, and NATO activated Operation SKY WATCH to observe and report violations of that ban. After observing hundreds of no-fly violations over the next several months, particularly by combat aircraft of the Bosnian Serb faction, the UN and NATO again cooperated to toughen the no-fly ban. On 31 March 1993, the UN issued UNSCR 816, banning all flights not authorized by the UN and authorizing member states to take all necessary actions to enforce that ban. Simultaneously, NATO replaced SKY WATCH with Operation DENY FLIGHT to signify the new element of force. Over subsequent months, NATO and the UN added other missions to DENY FLIGHT, including close air support (CAS) to protect UN personnel under attack, offensive air support (OAS) to punish factions violating UNSCRs, and suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD) to protect NATO aircraft flying the other missions. To coordinate planning and particularly the targets identified for attack in these missions, NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) also activated at the start of DENY FLIGHT a joint target coordination board (JTCB), composed of senior NATO and UN tactical commanders concerned with the use of airpower in the region and its consequences. These developments and the planning that went into them constituted an incremental, evolutionary process that laid the foundations of DELIBERATE FORCE, which, technically, was but a phase of DENY FLIGHT.

Intervention air planning evolved for nearly three years, roughly from the early fall of 1992 to the end of August 1995. An

important reason for that prolongation was the difficulty experienced by NATO, the UN, and the international community as a whole in reaching consensus on what the conflict was about. Observable events made it obvious that the principal sustaining elements of the Bosnian war were ethnic tensions, political manipulation of those tensions, and the imbalance of military power. But which sustaining element or elements exerted the most influence on its shape, scope, and virulence? In his research for the second chapter of the BACS, Prof. Karl Mueller identified two distinct schools of thought on this issue, particularly among interventionist governments. One school emphasized ethnic conflict. Somehow, in this view, Slavs were predisposed culturally to slice each other's throats. Bosnia was just a case in point—a place where collapse of the Yugoslav federal system's restraints merely unfettered long-restrained-but-never-forgotten ethnic hatreds in a perennially unstable and violent region. At the beginning of the Bosnian conflict, Mueller argued, this was the official view of most European interventionist governments—importantly, Britain and France—which provided most of the peacekeeping troops for Bosnia. The second school emphasized the political manipulations of Serbian political leaders such as Milosevic and Karadzic. Whatever the inherent instabilities of the region, this school of thought held that the current round of fighting had been sparked and sustained by the venal racism of irresponsible demagogues. This view of the conflict, which reflected the predominant official position of the United States after the spring of 1993, thus held that violence in the region was episodic—not perennial.<sup>4</sup>

---

**DENY FLIGHT planners found little guidance in their manuals and publications.**

---

For air planners, these two views of the sustaining elements of the Bosnian war were directly significant because each implied a different strategy of intervention. If the war were the consequence of endemic cultural forces, then it had no culprits. All sides were equally guilty and equally innocent—victims of forces beyond their control. If that were the case, then the proper role of an intervention was that of a neutral mediator. To the extent that one used force in such an intervention, one should do so only to protect the innocent, separate the warring factions, and encourage communications and confidence between them. In current US military usage, then, the view that conflict was perennial to Bosnia led to a peacemaking strategy aimed at ameliorating suffering and facilitating a cease-fire and political settlement as soon as possible. In contrast, if the war were the consequence of political manipulation, then it had culprits—the politicians exploiting the situation to sustain war for their own interests and those of their constituents. If that were the case, then coercion was also a legitimate role of military intervention, along with relief and confidence building. Assuming that one could identify the risk-benefit calculi of the political culprits, then one might be able to identify military targets that, if attacked or threatened, would shift the balance of their calculations toward peace. Intervention military force could also remediate the consequences of war crimes and territorial conquest by the war's aggressors. In that case, an immediate cessation of fighting might not be appropriate if it denied the interventionists the time required to set or help set things "right." In current US military usage, then, the view that conflict in Bosnia was episodic and opportunistic led in part to a strategy of peace enforcement aimed at coercing the appropriate warlords to accept peace and redress wrongs.

These two views of the causes of the war also had indirect significance for air planners, because their contrariety undermined the ability of NATO and the UN, as corporate organizations, to develop consensus be-

tween themselves and among their members on what exactly to do about Bosnia. Consensus was a necessary prelude to action because both organizations are voluntary associations of sovereign states. Once stated, this seems an obvious truth. But in the heat of events, military planners sometimes forget that, compared to the hierarchical order of military organizations, these international organizations operate on a basis akin to institutionalized anarchy. No matter how orderly and cooperative the internal processes of these organizations, their member states are not subordinate to them or the majority will of the other members. Even small states can block corporate actions simply by withholding their support from them. As a consequence, most of the senior diplomats interviewed for the BACS pointed out, explicitly or implicitly, that no general plans or policies for Bosnia, including those related to the use of airpower, had any hope of success unless they were endorsed by all the principal states in the intervention—particularly those in the Security Council and NATO. According to Robert Hunter, the US ambassador throughout DENY FLIGHT, building such consensus support for increasingly robust use of airpower over Bosnia was a difficult and months-long diplomatic process—but an absolute precursor to action.<sup>5</sup> Little wonder that Mueller described the debate over the sustaining causes of the war as "one of the major obstacles to Western efforts to deal with the crisis."<sup>6</sup>

The slow pace of policy development had one advantage for NATO airmen, including those who eventually put together DELIBERATE FORCE: it gave them time to overcome the institutional and doctrinal impediments they faced in planning and executing sustained air operations over Bosnia. In the third chapter of the BACS, Lt Col Bradley Davis described the organizational structure NATO had in place during DENY FLIGHT.<sup>7</sup> The Bosnian region fell under the purview of NATO's 5th Allied Tactical Air Force (5 ATAF), with headquarters at the Italian air force's Dal Molino Air Base (AB), Vicenza, Italy. The Italian general commanding 5 ATAF,

who at the time of DELIBERATE FORCE was Maj Gen Andrea Fornasiero, reported to the commander of Allied Air Forces Southern Command (AIRSOUTH). From December 1992, the AIRSOUTH commander was Lt Gen Joseph Ashy, until his replacement by Lt Gen Michael E. Ryan in September 1994. These two United States Air Force officers, in turn, reported to United States Navy admirals commanding Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), also headquartered in Naples, Italy. The commander in chief of AF-SOUTH (CINCSOUTH) at the beginning of DENY FLIGHT was Adm Jeremy Boorda, until his replacement by Adm Leighton W. Smith Jr. To complete the chain of command, AFSOUTH reported to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), also an American four-star commander. SACEUR took his general guidance from the ambassadors sitting on the NAC.

The problem, Davis assessed, was that neither 5 ATAF nor AFSOUTH were organized, manned, or equipped to handle the scale and complexity of an operation like DENY FLIGHT, let alone DELIBERATE FORCE. In late 1992, 5 ATAF was charged to oversee and control indirectly the air defense of Italy. Accordingly, it had modest communications connections with air defense centers and radar sites throughout Italy. But the 5 ATAF headquarters was small, and its control center was equipped with obsolescent equipment. It possessed none of the state-of-the-art automated air planning and information downlink systems that had proven so successful in the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. Similarly, AIRSOUTH was a small planning headquarters, charged with doing air planning for AFSOUTH and overseeing the activities of 5 ATAF and two other ATAFs based in Greece and Turkey. Neither AIRSOUTH nor AFSOUTH had crisis-planning cells to deal with the rapid onset and fast-paced political and military evolution of something like DENY FLIGHT.<sup>8</sup> Overall, the established strengths and equipment of the two headquarters fell far short of the likely demands of continual observation and no-fly enforcement operations over Bosnia.

NATO's formal doctrinal foundations for peace operations over Bosnia were also uneven. Since most key commanders and staff planners were Americans, Maj Robert Pollock, in a chapter of the BACS report, examined the formal body of theories that might have been relevant to planning DELIBERATE FORCE and available to AIRSOUTH planners. He explored three theoretical constructs available in open literature at the time: Robert Pape's denial strategy, John Warden's five-ring paradigm, and the Air Command and Staff College's "systems" approach to air targeting. Despite their markedly different theoretical propositions and planning approaches, Pollock found that these three theories generally produced target sets similar to one another and to the targets actually bombed during DELIBERATE FORCE.<sup>9</sup> The differences among them were marginal issues of timing and focus. However, for all

---

**Until just a few weeks before the actual execution of the campaign, there existed no plan or plan annex called DELIBERATE FORCE.**

---

the potentially useful guidance and reassurance these three concepts could have offered, neither Pollock nor other members of the BACS team uncovered oral evidence that AIRSOUTH planners had any working knowledge of them.

In his examination of written NATO doctrines, Col Maris McCrabb determined that DENY FLIGHT planners also found little guidance in their manuals and publications. That guidance was particularly spotty for operations other than war (OOTW), of which peace operations are a subset. Summarizing his findings, McCrabb noted that "NATO . . . air planning doctrine . . . focuses on coalition considerations but is largely silent on OOTW, while US joint doctrine, with heavier emphasis on . . . OOTW, does not



fully integrate coalition considerations. . . . An additional issue that bedevils both sets of doctrine is the role of airpower in either OOTW or conventional war."<sup>10</sup> These doctrinal shortfalls were glaring in relation to the unique and unprecedented relationship of NATO, primarily a regional military alliance, acting in military support of the UN, primarily a global political organization. Notably, established doctrines were largely silent on how airmen could reconcile, in their plans and target lists, the conflicting objectives and restraints that likely would crop up between two powerful organizations in a peacemaking situation in which at least one combatant did not want to make peace. Thus, addressing one of the principal

---

**In current US military usage, then, the view that conflict was perennial to Bosnia led to a peacemaking strategy aimed at ameliorating suffering and facilitating a cease-fire and political settlement as soon as possible.**

---

corollary research questions of the BACS, McCrabb concluded that "the question . . . of whether these planners referred to the existing body of doctrine, or just 'winged it,' is largely moot—there was almost nothing for them to refer to."<sup>11</sup>

This virtual absence of guidance for conducting multicoalition peace operations was understandable, given the unprecedented nature of the UN-NATO relationship. But it was an important void in the context of NATO air planning because the overall focus of UN strategy and the operational focus of NATO air commanders began to diverge almost at the start of DENY FLIGHT. Under SKY WATCH, the strategic focus of the intervention and NATO flyers was on peacemaking—observe and report, but don't engage.

But the decision to activate DENY FLIGHT added peace enforcement as a potential feature of intervention strategy. Though they never challenged the UN's overall commitment to maintaining its position as a neutral peacemaker, General Ashy and other senior NATO commanders immediately recognized that their operational focus would be on peace enforcement.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, since the Bosnian Serbs possessed far and away the largest air arm in Bosnia, DENY FLIGHT clearly was aimed predominantly at them. That focus sharpened in the spring and summer of 1993, when CAS and OAS missions were added to the DENY FLIGHT menu; the UN designated certain cities under the control of the Bosnian government as safe areas and committed itself to protect them. With those developments, NATO was flying in great part to restrict both the Serb faction's employment of a key military advantage and its ability to assail cities held by its enemies. That hardly was an act of peacemaking impartiality, and its contrast with the overall UN mission became a source of frustration for NATO airmen and of strategic debate, particularly within the NAC.

Given all these elements of their planning context, NATO airmen seem to have received their planning and operational responsibilities for DENY FLIGHT under unenviable circumstances. The conflict they were engaging was complicated enough in its origins and convoluted regional politics. But their task was complicated further by the presence of at least two broad interpretations of the conflict at play among their direct and indirect political leaders, and each one of those interpretations spoke to a different approach to the use of airpower. In their formal chain of command, the American flag officers in charge of DENY FLIGHT worked for the NAC, which was acting in support of the UN Security Council. At the beginning of DENY FLIGHT, most of the member governments of both organizations were determined to restrict the intervention to peacemaking operations and, consequently, to avoid any military operations that would appear to favor one Bosnian faction over the other. Yet,

in their informal chain of command, these officers were American, and by mid-1993 their government was on record in support of the use of airpower to halt or punish Serb aggression—a position that AFSOUTH leaders were inclined to agree with. Compounding this strategic issue, AFSOUTH was neither materially nor doctrinally ready for DENY FLIGHT. Consequently, while the strategic debate rolled on and the Bosnian crisis unfolded, these airmen would have to build up their conceptual understanding of the conflict as well as the command infrastructure and force structure required to plan and execute operations against regional combatants of uncertain means and intent to resist. To put it mildly, they faced a great challenge.

## Planning

To study the planning of DELIBERATE FORCE is to study DENY FLIGHT. Until just a few weeks before the actual execution of the campaign, there existed no plan or plan annex called DELIBERATE FORCE. When the term did appear in text, it seems to have done so first in the title of an AIRSOUTH briefing given in early August 1995—“Air Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina—DELIBERATE FORCE.”<sup>13</sup> But the briefing did not delineate the theaterwide bombing campaign that DELIBERATE FORCE became. It mainly listed the various contingency air plans thus far developed by AIRSOUTH to execute various aspects of the DENY FLIGHT mission. As a menu of specialized plans to enforce UNSCRs, protect specific safe areas, and suppress Bosnian Serb air defenses, this briefing offered NATO air commanders a foundation for responding to a future crisis, but it did not propose a specific action for a specific crisis. Accordingly, what happened a few weeks later, when the operation since recognized as DELIBERATE FORCE began, was the activation and rapid modification of several plans originally developed under the aegis of DENY FLIGHT. Despite its obvious differences in focus and intensity from the

main body of DENY FLIGHT, therefore, DELIBERATE FORCE can be understood only as an evolutionary outgrowth of the preparations and planning that went into the more prolonged operation. Col Chris Campbell and Lieutenant Colonel Davis detail various aspects of this planning effort in their BACS chapters, which form the foundation for much of what follows here.<sup>14</sup>

Deliberate planning for DENY FLIGHT began almost from the beginning of Operation SKY WATCH in mid-October 1992. By mid-November, after observing continued no-fly violations by all Bosnian factions but particularly by Serb combat aircraft, the UN and NATO began developing the details of a more robust enforcement plan. Air planners at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Mons, Belgium, began developing organizational, operational, and force-structure concepts for such a plan. Among other issues, they suggested that it would be necessary, in accordance with standard NATO practice, to establish a stand-alone combined air operations center (CAOC) to control expanded air operations over the region.<sup>15</sup>

This suggestion raised an issue of whether such a CAOC, if established, should be an expansion of the 5 ATAF command and control center at Vicenza or a new and separate creation. Responding to a NATO request to look into the issue, the commander of United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE), Gen Robert C. Oaks, dispatched his Seventeenth Air Force commander, Maj Gen James E. “Bear” Chambers, to visit and assess 5 ATAF’s suitability for taking on the expanded responsibilities of the anticipated operation. An experienced air commander who knew airpower as well as the region and who was already running USAFE’s part of the PROVIDE PROMISE humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo, Chambers was a logical choice for the task. By December, planning to increase AIRSOUTH’s ability to impose a no-fly enforcement regime over Bosnia was proceeding along several tracks.

Lieutenant General Ashy received command of AIRSOUTH at just that time. Liter-

ally on the day that he took over, Ashy sat down with Admiral Boorda and did "some serious planning for an air operation in the Balkans . . . to police a no-fly zone."<sup>16</sup> Holding General Chambers in high regard and wanting to utilize his familiarity with operations at Vicenza, Ashy elected to set up a stand-alone CAOC under Chambers's direction.<sup>17</sup> On paper, this CAOC was to be a subordinate extension of the existing 5 ATAF command center, but in practice General

---

**The gulf between the views of NATO air commanders and the UN on the proper use and aggressiveness of the use of airpower continued to widen after [the air strikes against the airfield at] Udbina.**

---

Chambers would report directly to AIRSOUTH. Ashy chose this arrangement over expanding the 5 ATAF facility because he believed it would give him tighter control over what he anticipated was going to be a fast-paced and politically hypersensitive situation. Ashy also considered either bringing the CAOC down to Naples or moving his own headquarters up to Vicenza, to place both the planning and execution staff functions of the forthcoming operation in one place. After some thought, he decided to accept the physical division of his staff in order to preserve other advantages. Leaving the CAOC in Vicenza had the advantage of preserving at least the form of the existing NATO command structure by keeping the Italian commander of 5 ATAF in the formal chain of command. Keeping his own planning headquarters in Naples would facilitate the daily, face-to-face contact with Admiral Boorda that Ashy felt he needed to do his job.<sup>18</sup>

The next order of business was to enhance the staff, planning, and communications capabilities of AIRSOUTH and the

CAOC to match the likely demands of DENY FLIGHT. Finding the CAOC operating with "ancient" equipment, Ashy and his staff pressed to bring up-to-date communications and intelligence data terminals into the CAOC and to connect the center to AIRSOUTH and to the NATO field units and squadrons that were beginning to deploy to bases around Italy. As part of this process, the CAOC received analysts and terminals for NATO's Linked Operations-Intelligence Centers Europe (LOCE) system. AIRSOUTH's intelligence capabilities were strengthened further by the transfer of intelligence personnel from Headquarters Sixteenth Air Force at Aviano AB, Italy, to Naples.<sup>19</sup> Recognizing that the permanently authorized strengths of the AIRSOUTH and CAOC staffs were still too small for the task at hand, Ashy also began to augment them on a rotating basis with personnel coming in on 30-to-90-day assignments. These temporary duty (TDY) personnel soon comprised the overwhelming majority of the CAOC staff and a significant portion of the AIRSOUTH force.

Meanwhile, AIRSOUTH planners began to lay the documentary foundations for DENY FLIGHT and possible combat operations. The focus of their work was CINCSOUTH Operations Plan (OPLAN) 40101, DENY FLIGHT, the overall guide for NATO air operations in support of UN peace operations in Bosnia. Much of this document and its iterations remains classified and, consequently, outside the scope of this article. Their details are discussed in greater length in several BACS chapters, particularly Colonel Campbell's. But it is appropriate to say here that OPLAN 40101 started out as a skeletal document laying out rules of engagement and the CINC's concept of operations (CONOPS), and then evolved into a more thorough document that laid out the situation appraisals, strategy choices, coordination procedures, logistics issues, rules of engagement (ROE), and so on that CINCSOUTH believed were pertinent to the new, complex operation before his command. Since DENY FLIGHT was primarily an air op-

eration, most of the work on 40101 was done by a few members of the AIRSOUTH staff or by other parts of AFSOUTH, with the close involvement of General Ashy and his subordinates.<sup>20</sup>

The first two versions of OPLAN 40101 came out in rapid succession, reflecting the rapid expansion of the DENY FLIGHT mission in the first half of 1993. The first version, approved by the NAC on 8 April, mainly described how AIRSOUTH would intercept, inspect, and engage aircraft violating the no-fly mandate. The second version came out on 13 August. Its provisions reflected the UN's and NAC's addition of CAS and OAS to the menu of possible NATO air missions.

The addition of OAS to the OPLAN necessitated that AIRSOUTH create and get NAC approval of an appropriate target list. That approval came in the form of an NAC decision statement issued on 8 August, just days before the release of second iteration of OPLAN 40101. This decision statement spelled out three targeting options for offensive air strikes. Option one provided for OAS strikes of limited duration and scope against military forces and weapon systems directly violating UN resolutions or attacking UN peace forces or other personnel. Option-two targets were mechanisms for lifting sieges. Their focus remained on military forces and supporting elements, but their scope expanded to include targets throughout the immediate environs of a besieged safe area. Option-three targets marked out a broader campaign against targets outside the immediate area of a siege.<sup>21</sup> Over the coming months, AFSOUTH made marginal adjustments to this basic target list, but the three-option categorization remained in effect.

By the time all these organizational and planning events had taken place, the inherent tension between the UN's peacekeeping focus and the peace-enforcement character of DENY FLIGHT was affecting operations profoundly. The establishment and, more to the point, the interpretation of the ROE for the operation provided an early indication

of that tension. In his chapter on ROE, Maj Ron Reed explained that these rules are a natural bellwether of problems in a military operation. Their function is to link objectives, strategy, operations, and international law to establish the methods and limits of force usable in a conflict. To be viable, coalition ROE must reflect the views of all members and the realities of the situation. If either of those conditions is not met, then disputes will rise quickly, over and around them.<sup>22</sup> In the case of Bosnia, NATO officially endorsed the UN's strategic vision. So, in the absence of overt conflict, General Ashy and his staff worked out and got UN and NAC approval for an initial set of ROE by February 1993.<sup>23</sup> The real tension came from what proved to be the UN's greater reluctance, at least compared to the inclination of involved air commanders, actually to act on the ROE. "NATO," Major Reed concluded in his study, "would always view the use of force in terms of compelling the Bosnian Serbs . . . [while] the UN . . . viewed force in a much more limited context of self-defense." Indeed, despite many opportunities to do so, the UN also did not release a CAS attack in defense of peacekeeping forces on the ground until 12 March 1994.<sup>24</sup>

---

**If the war were the consequence of endemic cultural forces, then it had no culprits. All sides were equally guilty and equally innocent—victims of forces beyond their control.**

---

The fact that UN political leaders exercised such close control of air operations was another manifestation of the internal peacekeeper/peace-enforcer posture of the intervention. In June 1993, NATO and the UN adopted a so-called dual-key procedure for releasing CAS and OAS strikes. Drawing metaphorically on the procedural requirement for two individuals to "turn keys" to release or launch nuclear weapons, the ar-

rangement required appropriate officials in both the UN and NATO to turn their keys before any NATO aircraft could release weapons against a ground target. For NATO, any military commander, from the CAOC director up, could authorize CAS strikes in response to a UN request. CINCAFSOUTH retained release authority for offensive air strikes. For the UN, the decision thresholds were raised one organizational level. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali authorized his special representative, Ambassador Yasushi Akashi, to release CAS strikes, while retaining for himself the authority to release offensive air strikes.<sup>25</sup> The dual-key arrangement, thus, was an overt effort to counterbalance UN and NATO control over air operations. As such, it indicated at least a corporate presumption among the member states of each organization that some possibility of misunderstanding or irresponsibility existed in the way one organization or the other might interpret the standing ROE and the immediate circumstances of a proposed strike.

A question arises here: If the corporate membership of both organizations feared the possibility of an irresponsible or ill-advised use of airpower, who did they think would do it? To a large extent, the evidence available to the BACS suggests that the main concern centered around the "Americanization" of the intervention's air option. Since the summer of 1993, and with greater fervor after the following winter, US political leaders were the most outspoken advocates of the punitive use of airpower in the Balkans. From the beginning of DENY FLIGHT, NATO airpower in the Balkans was under the control of American flag officers, albeit ones serving as NATO commanders. Moreover, most of the alliance's offensive air strength resided in a powerful American composite wing based at Aviano AB in northeastern Italy. Several European states, particularly those with lightly armed peacekeeping forces committed on the ground, had fears (whether ill grounded or not) that these circumstances could lead to a unilateral, American use of the air weapon

in a manner that might escalate the level of violence in the region or the intervention's role in it. Thus, according to Ambassador Hunter, several members of the NAC proposed the dual-key procedure to both NATO and the UN, in an effort to set up an arrangement that most people believed would preclude any offensive air action.<sup>26</sup> US ambassador Richard Holbrooke shared Hunter's assessment.<sup>27</sup> Part of the dual-key arrangement was about controlling a powerful and politically sensitive "weapon" in the coalition's arsenal, and part of it was about controlling the holders of that weapon.

If ROE and the dual-key arrangement reflected the tension between and within the UN and NATO over the proper strategy of intervention in Bosnia, they also helped to increase those tensions on many occasions. This particularly was the case whenever the two organizations actually prepared to use airpower against the Bosnian Serbs. In the press of events, NATO air commanders and American diplomats generally found themselves pushing for aggressive and strong air strikes, while most other intervention partners and the leaders of the UN called for caution and restraint.

The air strike against Udbina Airfield on 21 November 1994 highlighted this tension. NATO and the UN ordered the strike to punish recent violations of the no-fly ban by Bosnian-Serb and Krajina-Serb aircraft, some of which were based at the airfield. Lieutenant General Ryan, who had taken over AIRSOUTH only weeks before, anticipated an active defense of the field and requested a comprehensive "takedown" of it, to include strikes against the offending aircraft themselves, the runway and taxiways, and the air defense systems and weapons in the area. Echoing his air commander's approach, Admiral Smith said the proper goal of the attack was "to make a parking lot out of Udbina Airfield."<sup>28</sup> Intending to show restraint and to limit Serb casualties, however, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali approved attacks only against Udbina's runway and taxiways—not against aircraft and local air defense systems, which presumably would

be manned during the attack. Among other considerations, the secretary-general hoped to avoid provoking the Bosnian Serbs into taking UN hostages, as they had done once already, in retaliation for a NATO CAS strike near Gorazde the previous April. Viewing the UN's restrictions as rendering the proposed air strikes largely ineffective and increasing the risks to their aircrews, Smith and Ryan pressured the secretary-general and Ambassador Akashi to put aircraft and defense systems back on the target list. The UN leaders finally agreed to preapprove attacks against defense systems of immediate threat to NATO aircraft only. They continued to bar attacks against Serb aircraft.<sup>29</sup> NATO jets struck several anti-aircraft artillery sites and a surface-to-air site in the immediate vicinity of the airfield, but, otherwise, they struck only the runways.<sup>30</sup> It was a less-than-convincing demonstration of NATO airpower or resolve, one that left American air commanders and some diplomats very frustrated.<sup>31</sup>

The gulf between the views of NATO air commanders and the UN on the proper purpose and aggressiveness of the use of airpower continued to widen after Udbina. The UN's clear reluctance to employ the weapon came out clearly after the attack, when Ambassador Akashi pointedly drew a line between the UN and the peace-enforcement action just performed by NATO jets. Writing to Radovan Karadzic, he reported that NATO aircraft were under UN control but would act only in defense of UNSCRs and UNPROFOR. Despite the implications of the air attacks on the Serbs, he reported that NATO aircraft were "neither the enemy nor the ally of any combatant."<sup>32</sup> NATO commanders increasingly became frustrated with the UN's long decision process in relation to releasing air strikes. This frustration reached a peak in the summer of 1995, Admiral Smith recalled, when UN peacekeepers "protecting" the city of Srebrenica called desperately for CAS. NATO jets were ready for attack within minutes, but the UN refused to turn its "key" for two days, by which time the fall of the city to the Serbs was assured.<sup>33</sup> Reflecting

the views of many American leaders involved in Bosnia, Ambassador Holbrooke declared the dual-key arrangement an "unmitigated disaster" that placed the UN and NATO in a stressful and improper relationship of overlapping responsibility and friction.<sup>34</sup>

The political sensitivity of the airpower issue also influenced DENY FLIGHT planning activities. Throughout the operation, Generals Ashy and Ryan took pains to ensure that their planning efforts and operations did not undermine the confidence of NATO and UN political leaders in the professionalism and self-control of their command. To that end, all iterations of OPLAN 40101, ending with change four in May 1995, carefully tied anticipated AIRSOUTH operations to the protection of UN forces and the enforcement of specific UNSCRs, whether they were air-to-air, SEAD, CAS, or OAS missions. The OPLAN also admonished NATO airmen to ensure that their strikes, when authorized at all, were "proportional" (i.e., that they avoided unnecessary casualties and collateral damage).<sup>35</sup> Also, the three target options listed in AIRSOUTH attack plans offered reassurance that NATO forces were a flexible instrument and tightly under control. According to Ambassador Hunter, the implicit reassurances of these provisions were essential underpinnings of his efforts to garner and maintain support among NAC members for more robust air operations.<sup>36</sup>

From the inception of DENY FLIGHT, Generals Ashy and Ryan had asked NATO to second non-US colonels and general officers on a permanent basis to fill key command-and-staff billets at AIRSOUTH and the CAOC. Despite their continued requests, on the eve of DELIBERATE FORCE, all major staff positions at the CAOC and most at AIRSOUTH were filled by USAF colonels.<sup>37</sup> Most of their subordinates at the CAOC were American junior officers and sergeants. This was an anomalous situation in the NATO command structure, in which commanders and their deputies usually are of different nationalities, as are commanders at succeeding levels of organization. The essentially

American manning of the CAOC and the air command structure may have been as much a product of the unease some NAC member states felt about the air weapon, as it was a cause of that unease. Several BACS researchers heard secondary reports that the situation at the CAOC grated the non-US officers there, but the team's letters asking such individuals directly about their perceptions and attitudes were not answered. Significantly, however, Ambassador Hunter never heard complaints voiced by the national representatives on the NAC, where such complaints would have necessitated corrective action. In his opinion, the willingness of NATO political leaders to accept the arrangement may well have reflected both their unwillingness to have their nationals too closely associated with what might become a politically explosive employment of airpower, and their recognition that USAF personnel were best trained and equipped to handle the anticipated air operations.<sup>38</sup> The BACS team found no documentary support for Hunter's perception, but it was shared by most senior air commanders interviewed. Further, there remains the inescapable fact that other NATO states did not offer officers to fill key command positions.

NATO's ambivalence about the potential use of combat airpower in Bosnia also seems to have undermined whatever willingness UN leaders had to allow NATO to use air more freely in defense of their resolutions. As in the case of the use of any military force, a halfhearted or incomplete air operation would be indecisive, politically and diplomatically vulnerable to global criticism, susceptible to breaking up what support there was in the UN and NATO for continued intervention, and, as a consequence of all other effects, likely to do more to stir up the Bosnian hornet's nest than to calm it. Thus, Ambassador Hunter reported, a large measure of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's unwillingness to authorize CAS operations in defense of UN troops, let alone to consider a robust OAS campaign against the Serb targets throughout the area, was due to his belief—through the spring of

1995—that NATO did not have the political cohesion or commitment to carry such operations to a successful conclusion. The secretary-general made it clear to Hunter that he would never approve such operations unless he was convinced the UN would stick them out for their full course. Most of Hunter's diplomatic efforts in the NAC during 1994 and 1995, therefore, focused on building such cohesion and commitment among the other member governments. Until enough or all of them decided to back a robust air operation, he did not expect the UN to release NATO jets to pound the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>39</sup>

Consensus support for offensive air strikes to protect the safe areas began to build among NATO member states in the spring and early summer of 1995, as a result of several considerations and events. In general, three years of brazen Serbian defiance of UN resolutions and the laws of war had worn the patience of probably most of the governments intervening in Bosnia and had infused the intervention with a sense of desperation. By mid-May 1995, the international press reported that, as a result of the seemingly unstoppable fighting, "the nearly 40,000 UN peacekeepers in the region are descending into a state of ever more irrelevance and danger," that Ambassador Akashi had "become a comic figure," and that there was a "willingness to declare the Contact Group [see below] dead."<sup>40</sup> Then, to punish the Bosnian Serbs for violating the Sarajevo safe area, NATO jets struck Serb ammunition depots around the city of Pale on 24 May 1995. The Serbs responded by taking 370 UN peacekeepers hostage and chaining some of them to potential targets, thereby paralyzing the intervention. This humiliation, as it played out, led Secretary of Defense William Perry to declare that "the credibility of the international community was at stake."<sup>41</sup> It also moved most interventionist governments nearer to the standing US position that a robust air campaign was needed to force the Serbs to obey UN resolutions.

Support for forceful action grew through June and into mid-July in the face of contin-

ued Serb attacks on the safe areas of Zepa, Gorazde, and Srebrenica, and when the Bosnian Serbs shot down a US F-16. Finally, after the UN rejected an AFSOUTH request of 20 June for air strikes to punish Serb violations of the no-fly edict, after Srebrenica fell to brutal assault on 11 July, and with Zepa apparently next on the list for Serbian conquest, the foreign ministers of 16 intervening states met at London during 21-25 July, largely at the prodding of Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare the way for and lay out the form of a more forceful intervention in the Bosnian conflict. The weapon of necessity, as every diplomat probably understood at that time, would have to be NATO airpower.<sup>42</sup>

By the time the foreign ministers gathered at London, NATO air planners had amassed a comprehensive set of plans to offer the ministers for dealing with specific aspects of the Bosnian conflict, along with a clear idea of how they wanted to apply those plans. All of these plans were subelements of the basic OPLAN 40101, though most had been initiated after General Ryan took over AIRSOUTH in October 1994. Standing out among these plans was DEAD EYE, the SEAD plan initiated by General Ryan, following the strikes on Udbina Airfield. DEAD EYE's purpose was to provide protection for NATO aircraft from Bosnian Serb air defenses as they flew in protection of the safe areas or on other missions. A salient feature of DEAD EYE, one that set it apart from the geographic restrictions placed on CAS and OAS strikes, was that it provided for comprehensive attacks against integrated air defense system (IADS) targets throughout Bosnia, if necessary. In early 1995, as the plan evolved in detail, it incorporated a division of Bosnia into southeast and northwest zones of action (ZOA), based on the Sarajevo and Banja-Luka areas, respectively. As described by Col Daniel R. Zoerb, director of the AIRSOUTH DENY FLIGHT operations cell, Maj Kieth Kiger of his staff proposed these ZOAs "to facilitate deconfliction of planned simultaneous fighter attacks on the IADS,"

but they did not imply any restrictions of the overall freedom of NATO airmen to attack elements of the IADS throughout Bosnia to defend themselves. If his aircraft flew in defense of a city in either ZOA, General Ryan expected to launch attacks against air defenses throughout the embattled country.<sup>43</sup>

On an ongoing basis, AIRSOUTH planners also created plans to protect specific safe areas and updated them as necessary. Following the Pale bombings at the end of May 1995, General Ryan's planners developed a briefing called "NATO Air Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina," which mainly listed and described the various attack options available, but not DEAD EYE. During July and early August, this briefing expanded to include a CONOPS suggesting that ground-attack plans to defend Bosnian cities be based on the ZOA boundaries laid out for DEAD EYE. Under existing arrangements, NATO aircraft striking in defense of a safe area were limited to hitting targets within the 20- or 30-kilometer exclusion zone around it. What AFSOUTH planners were calling for was the freedom to strike a broader array of targets throughout any ZOA in which a besieged city was located. Thus, by the time the London conference convened, NATO air planners in AFSOUTH were thinking in terms of broad-ranging ground attacks, supported by a theaterwide SEAD campaign in defense of Bosnian cities rather than the halting and piecemeal applications that had characterized the use of air to that point.

From the American perspective, London began as an effort to issue a powerful threat of air strikes against the Serbs for what Secretary Christopher called their "outrageous aggression."<sup>44</sup> At the end of the conference's first day, Christopher asserted that the ministers had agreed that "an attack against Gorazde will be met by decisive and substantial air power."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, he announced that "existing command-and-control arrangements for the use of NATO air power will be adjusted to ensure that responsiveness and unity are achieved." By this he meant that



the United States expected the UN's role in tactical decision making to diminish, perhaps by ending the dual-key procedure.<sup>46</sup> Last, Christopher asserted that the gathered ministers agreed that "the taking of hostages will no longer be allowed to prevent implementation of our policies." All this, he stated, reflected a general belief that "so long as the Bosnian Serb aggression continues, any political process [for peace] is doomed to failure."<sup>47</sup> In sum, Christopher was forecasting an intervention strategy in which airpower would force the Serbs to halt their attacks on Bosnian cities and which would thereby open the way to productive peace negotiations.

---

**Most of the senior diplomats interviewed for the BACS pointed out, explicitly or implicitly, that no general plans or policies for Bosnia, including those related to the use of airpower, had any hope of success unless they were endorsed by all the principal states in the intervention.**

---

In contrast to Secretary Christopher's confident predictions, however, other events at the London conference indicated that the gathered ministers were not all fully behind the American proposal to unleash a determined air assault. British foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind announced that "although there was strong support for airpower, there were also reservations . . . [and] it would be used only if it was felt necessary."<sup>48</sup> In a similar vein of caution, the French delegation reconfirmed a demand that any bombing operations be preceded by ground reinforcements, particularly to the endangered city of Gorazde.<sup>49</sup> As a consequence of these reservations, the conference's declaration actually extended the threat of air strikes only in protection of Gorazde, a limitation that prompted the Bosnian prime

minister, Haris Silajdzic, to declare it a "green light" to attacks everywhere else. Publicly at least, Bosnian Serb leaders also were not intimidated by the London conference's threats, as evidenced by the Bosnian Serb army's continued attacks on UN protected cities.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, at NATO headquarters, Ambassador Hunter, Secretary-General Willie Claes, and other leaders were orchestrating events in the NAC to give some credence to the London conference's threat of decisive air action. Following an NAC meeting on 25 July, the day the conference ended, Claes announced that the NAC had approved "the necessary planning to ensure that NATO air power would be used in a timely and effective way should the Bosnian Serbs threaten or attack Gorazde." The secretary-general also indicated that planning would begin to protect the other safe areas, and he warned that "such operations, once they are launched will not likely be discontinued."<sup>51</sup> Not included in Secretary-General Claes's press release were the operational details settled by the NAC. These included adoption of the so-called trigger events that, if they occurred, would prompt the start of bombing. Also, the NAC approved AFSOUTH's plan to defend each Bosnian city by striking Serb targets throughout the ZOA in which that city was located.<sup>52</sup> Finally, NATO sent three air commanders to Bosnia to convince the Bosnian Serb military commander, Gen Ratko Mladic, of the alliance's determination to carry out its threats.<sup>53</sup>

All of these events were welcome news for General Ryan and Admiral Smith. They were particularly pleased by the NAC's clearance to strike throughout a given ZOA in defense of a city within it. Had they been held to hitting only targets in the military exclusion zones surrounding the safe areas, they believed that their sorties would be expended against hard-to-find-and-attack tactical targets, such as artillery pieces and armored vehicles. The two commanders anticipated that air attacks against those kinds of "direct" targets would be slow to inflict enough "pain" on the Serbs to force them to

comply with UN demands. Consequently, they welcomed the opportunity to plan against a wider range of "indirect" targets, such as bridges, command facilities, supply dumps, and so on, that they also knew would be easier to find and destroy. Moreover, Ryan and Smith anticipated that, sortie-per-sortie, such a campaign would inflict more coercive pain on the Serbs, and at less cost in blood and time than would one focused on direct targets.<sup>54</sup> Blood and time would be their greatest concern, Smith and Ryan believed, because they anticipated that public support for the campaign would quickly dwindle, particularly if NATO bombs began to kill civilians—or even Bosnian Serb soldiers.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to broadening AFSOUTH's planning leeway, the NAC's actions on 25 July also opened the way for UN leaders to drop their resistance to a heavy campaign of offensive air strikes. As public and strong statements of intent to punish Serb attacks on the safe areas, the NAC's decisions went a long way toward showing the UN secretary-general that most, if not all, NATO member states had found the commitment and domestic political stamina to initiate and stay with an air campaign long enough to have an effect on Serbian actions and policy. In response, the secretary-general on that same day transferred the UN "keys" for approving offensive air strikes and CAS from his hands and those of Ambassador Akashi, respectively, to those of Gen Bernard Janvier, the UNPROFOR commander.<sup>56</sup> The power to launch strikes against the Serbs now lay in the hands of military commanders on the scene.

As Colonel Campbell describes in his BACS chapter, General Ryan responded to these rapid shifts in the political and diplomatic environment of the intervention by accelerating the ongoing air planning effort.<sup>57</sup> His staff continued to refine individual safe-area plans and DEAD EYE. Exploiting the freedom to plan attacks across a ZOA, AIRSOUTH staffers also produced a plan called VULCAN, which postulated wide-ranging strikes in the southeastern ZOA

to protect Sarajevo. Another new briefing titled "Graduated Air Operations" proposed a stepwise escalation of attacks across a ZOA to force the Serbs to back away from one or more safe areas. By 3 August these planning actions had reached a point that Admiral Smith and General Ryan could brief Secretary-General Claes and Gen George Joulwan, SACEUR, on how they intended to apply offensive air strikes in the Balkans. With the endorsements of these leaders in hand, Admiral Smith signed a memorandum on 10 August with General Janvier and his deputy in Sarajevo, British lieutenant general Rupert Smith, that clarified the "over arching purpose," "phasing," "assumptions," and so on to guide the looming air campaign.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, AIRSOUTH worked out further air-ground coordination arrangements and target lists with UN ground commanders and with British major general David Pennyfather, chief of staff of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force, which had been deploying into Sarajevo for several weeks.<sup>59</sup> By the third week of August, then, General Ryan had at least the plans in place to fight on behalf of the UN.

Also, as the summer passed, General Ryan took advantage of the relaxed diplomatic restraints on planning large-scale offensive operations by expanding the CAOC's manning and equipment as quickly as possible. Guided and underpinned, in part, by the recommendations of a Pentagon study team that assessed the CAOC's readiness for expanded air operations in late July, Ryan drew heavily on US manpower and equipment to expand the CAOC's capabilities.<sup>60</sup> Several hundred TDY augmentees began flowing in from US bases everywhere, along with a flood of state-of-the-art communications, intelligence, and automated planning systems. Perhaps most importantly, elements of a USAF Contingency Theater Air Planning System (CTAPS) began to arrive, which, when fully assembled and operating, would vastly enhance the CAOC's ability to plan, monitor, and control high-intensity air operations in near real time.

Taken together, these actions pretty much completed the effective "Americanization" of the CAOC, but that was a price Ryan and Lt Gen Hal Hornburg felt ready to pay in the rush to get ready. Politics had for months restrained their ability to prepare for an enlarged air war, and now politics had suddenly presented them with the likelihood of just such a war, much faster than they could adjust their forces to accommodate.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, despite the fact that the vast majority of their CAOC personnel had been in Italy for less than a few weeks or even days,

and despite the piles of unopened CTAPS equipment boxes lying around, Admiral Smith, General Ryan, General Hornburg (the director of the CAOC), and Hornburg's deputy, Brig Gen David A. Sawyer (who doubled as the 5 ATAF deputy commander), were ready for a fight by the third week of August—about a week before they found themselves in the middle of one. To be continued in the Fall 1997 issue.

#### Notes

1. Col Robert C. Owen, ed., *DELIBERATE FORCE: A Case Study in Air Campaigning: Report of the Air University Balkans Air Campaign Study*, unpublished. At the time of the printing of this "Summary," the main report was in the final stage of revision at Air University, and on file in the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, Ala. [hereinafter AFHRA] Its classified final version should be available for official use by January 1998, with a declassified version available sometime in the summer. The total report currently consists of 13 chapters written by 11 different authors:

- Chapter 1: "Preface," Col Robert C. Owen
- Chapter 2: "The Demise of Yugoslavia and the Destruction of Bosnia," Karl Mueller
- Chapter 3: "The Planning Background," Lt Col Bradley S. Davis
- Chapter 4: "US and NATO Doctrine for Campaign Planning," Col Maris McCrabb
- Chapter 5: "The DELIBERATE FORCE Air Campaign Plan," Col Christopher Campbell
- Chapter 6: "Executing DELIBERATE FORCE," Maj Mark Conversino
- Chapter 7: "Combat Assessment," Maj Mark C. McLaughlin
- Chapter 8: "Assessing the Effectiveness of DELIBERATE FORCE: Harnessing the Political-Military Connection," Maj Mark C. McLaughlin
- Chapter 9: "Weapons and Tactics," Lt Col Richard L. Sargent
- Chapter 10: "Leaders and Followers—The Human Factor," Maj John C. Orndorff
- Chapter 11: "Chariots of Fire: Rules of Engagement in Operation DELIBERATE FORCE," Maj Ronald M. Reed
- Chapter 12: "Roads Not Taken—Theoretical Approaches to Operation DELIBERATE FORCE," Maj Robert D. Pollock
- Chapter 13: "Summary," Col Robert C. Owen

**NOTE:** Since these chapters remain in draft and under revision, they are cited here in after with out pagination.

2. Some important analysts of this conflict would add a fourth sustaining cause: the misguided intervention of outside states and organizations in the conflict. In their view, the collapse of Yugoslavia created a constitutional crisis delineated by

those who wanted to preserve a multiethnic federal state, where individual rights and economic opportunities were protected by law, and those who sought security and opportunity in the creation of ethnic-based nation-states, carved out of the existing republics of the Federation. In this view, individual European states, notably Germany, strengthened the nationalist position and assured the breakup of Yugoslavia by recognizing the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. Similarly, war became inevitable in Bosnia, when the United States successfully pressured the UN and the European Community into recognizing its independence in March and April 1992. This is an important argument that relates directly to the effects of DELIBERATE FORCE. But the gross effect of the intervention on Bosnian politics was not a strategy consideration for NATO air planners. They were not asked if they should intervene—they were simply given the parameters of their part of the intervention and told to do it. Thus, this particular issue is not included in the list of sustaining causes in this study of air planning, though it no doubt is a critical consideration—particularly at the level of grand strategy. For the details of this case, see Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1995); and Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course, and Consequences* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

3. Terminology for describing the Moslem-Serb community is a problem. Some analysts use *Bosniaks*, apparently to give them a nonreligious label, like Serbs and Croats. The problem with that term is that it implies a closer link between the Moslem community and the cause of preserving the multiethnic unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia than it does for Serbs and Croats. With many individual exceptions, such may have been the case at the start of the Bosnian conflict, but in the pressure cooker of war, Moslem leaders adopted increasingly "ethnic" political objectives and rhetoric. So this chapter refers to Moslems as such, when appropriate, and refers to the national government or cause as Bosnian.

4. Chap. 2.

5. Robert A. Hunter, tape-recorded interview by author, 23 July 1996, tape 1, side A, index 50.

6. Chap. 2.

7. Chap. 3.

8. Lt Col R. Boyd, Headquarters AIRSOUTH, Naples, Italy, interviewed by author, 6 December 1995.

9. Chap. 12.

10. Chap. 4.

11. Ibid.

12. Gen Joseph W. Ashy, commander, US Space Command, transcript of interview by author, 29 April 1996, 10; and Adm Leighton Smith, "NATO Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina: DELIBERATE FORCE, 29 August-14 September 1995," presentation to Air War College, 9 November 1995, videotape, index 1046, AFHRA, Bosnia Air Campaign Study (BACS) file Misc-19.

13. Briefing, "NATO Air Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina-DELIBERATE FORCE" (U), c. 1 August 1995. (NATO Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

14. Chaps. 3 and 5.

15. The military and civilian issues related to setting up the CAOC were complex. As Gen Joseph Ashy pointed out in comments to this draft, NATO was contemplating its first out-of-area, offensive military commitment in a region where some members, notably Britain and France, already had troops committed under the UN ban. Also, the whole question of DENY FLIGHT command arrangements had implications for a broader question of the future shape of AFSOUTH arrangements, including whether or not it should remain under an American commander. However, because the detailed origins of the CAOC were not central to the DELIBERATE FORCE planning effort, the BACS team did not explore them deeply, other than to come to grips with the influence that the ultimate location and organizational nature of the CAOC wielded on events. Here again is another rich area for additional research. See Robert C. Owen, memorandum for record, subject: General Ashy's Telephone Comments to Second Draft of BACS, 20 July, AFHRA; and Col Larry Bickel, discussion with author, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, 24 August 1996. At the time of this discussion, Bickel was assigned to Headquarters United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE), but in the fall of 1992, he served at SHAPE as a Balkans-region air planner. He (probably along with others) suggested the initial term CAOC, in conformity with NATO terminology and practice.

16. Ashy interview, 4.

17. Ibid., 6.

18. Ibid., 25-57.

19. Ibid., 28-32; and Lt Col Lowell R. Boyd, AIRSOUTH planner, Headquarters AIRSOUTH, Naples, Italy, transcript of interview by author, 6 December 1995, 12-13.

20. Boyd interview, 6. Throughout the period under discussion, Lieutenant Colonel Boyd acted as one of General Ashy's principal planners, and he was particularly responsible for ROE development. Boyd also mentions that Maj Richard Corzine was involved in AFSOUTH ROE development in the early phases of DENY FLIGHT.

21. Memorandum for the NATO secretary-general, NAC Decision Statement, MCM-KAD-084-93, subject: Operational Options for Air Strikes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 8 August 1993.

22. Chap. 11.

23. Ashy interview, 36.

24. Chap. 11.

25. Smith presentation, index 865-900. It is important to be reminded here that the dual-key arrangement did not apply to air action against aircraft violating the no-fly resolution. It only applied to air-to-ground CAS and OAS strikes. Under the provisions of the UN-NATO ROE, the decision to attack offending aircraft resided in NATO channels, from the director of the CAOC up. What seems fair to say, however, is that the dual-key reflected a pervasive caution in the UN and NATO over the use of any military force that, in turn, also made leaders in both organizations cautious about enforcing the no-fly edict, particularly against noncombat aircraft, such as helicopters, that might have noncombat or nonmilitary personnel aboard. But when NATO pilots observed Serbian strike aircraft in the act of bombing Bosnian targets on 28 February 1994, the reaction was swift and sure, resulting in the shoot down of four aircraft.

26. Hunter interview, tape 1, side A, in dex 350-450.

27. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, tape-recorded interview by Maj Mark McLaughlin and Dr. Karl Mueller, 24 May 1996, side A, index 584. BACS researchers also heard statements that the dual-key setup also may have been a way of giving the French an indirect veto over NATO air operations. With lightly armed peacekeeping forces on the ground, the French had reason to be concerned over any action that might prompt attacks on them. Without a chair on the NAC, however, the French had no direct say in the use of NATO airpower. But through its permanent seat on the UN Security Council, the French government could influence those operations through the UN "key." The BACS team uncovered no documentary or direct oral evidence that French concerns influenced NATO's decision to propose the dual-key setup, but the idea seems plausible. Clearly, this is an attractive area for further research.

28. Smith presentation, index 1280.

29. Ibid., in dex 1270-1330.

30. Maj Scott G. Walker, Maxwell AFB, Ala., interviewed by author, 28 February 1997. Walker was the deputy mission commander of the Udbina air attack. See also "NATO Jets Knock Out Base for Serb Planes," *The Stars and Stripes*, 22 November 1994, 1-2.

31. Holbrooke interview, side A, in dex 567.

32. Yasushi Akashi to Radovan Karadzic, letter, 10 December 1994.

33. Smith presentation, index 1080-1105.

34. Holbrooke interview, side A, in dex 029-040.

35. Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Europe, CINC-SOUTH OPLAN 40101, DENY FLIGHT (U), change four, 3 May 1993 (SECRET). Information extracted is unclassified. Also, it is important to note that the term "proportional" was a bone of contention between NATO air planners and the UN, since the planners thought of it as meaning an appropriate level of response, while prior to the Pale bombing, UN planners and leaders took the term as meaning "tit for tat" (i.e., attacking "smoking guns"). See Col Daniel R. Zorb, "Comments to Second Draft of the BACS," fax message to Col Robert C. Owen, 16 July 1997, AFHRA, 10.

36. Hunter interview, tape 1, side B, index 035; and tape 2, side A, in dex 2835.

37. Briefing, Lt Gen Hal Hornburg to BACS team, Air Force Wargaming Institute, Maxwell AFB, Ala., 14 March 1996. General Hornburg was deputy director of the CAOC at the time of DELIBERATE FORCE.

38. Hunter interview, tape 2, side A, in dex 949.

39. Ibid., tape 1, side A, in dex 1157-1559.

40. James L. Graff, "A Good Season for War," *Time Magazine*, 15 May 1995, 48-49.

41. Quoted in "Pity the Peacekeepers," *Time Magazine*, 5 June 1995, 39.

42. In November 1995 Adm Leighton Smith reported that the brutality of the Serbian conquest of Srebrenica was the decisive event in bringing the foreign ministers to London. Smith presentation, index 1570.

43. The details of this phase of planning, many of which remain classified, are discussed at length in chap. 4. See also Zorb.

44. For impressions and reportage on the conference, see Michael Evans's two articles in the *London Times* of 22 July 1995: "Muted Threat Falls Short of Summit Hopes" and "American Deal Sours over Dinner." See also text of Secretary Christopher's speech of 22 July: "The International Conference on Bosnia: Now We Must Act," U.S. Department of State Dispatch, 24 July 1995, 583-84.

45. Christopher, 583.

46. This reflects Michael Evans's view in "American Deal Sours."

47. Christopher, 584.

48. Evans, "Muted Threat."

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>49. Evans, "American Deal Sours."</p> <p>50. Evans, "Muted Threat."</p> <p>51. NATO, "Press Statement by the Secretary General Following North Atlantic Meeting on 25 July 1995."</p> <p>52. Gen George Joulwan, SACEUR, SHAPE, Casteau, Belgium, tape-recorded interview by Jerry McGinn, 24 July 1996, tape 1, side A, in dex 832-1128.</p> | <p>53. Gen James L. Jamerson, deputy commander in chief, US European Command, interviewed by author, 23 July 1996. General Jamerson was one of the officers sent.</p> <p>54. Smith presentation, index 1950-2065.</p> <p>55. Lt Gen Michael Ryan, Headquarters AIRSOUTH, Naples, Italy, interviewed by Maj Tim Reagan, Air Force Studies and Analysis Agency (AFSAA), and Dr. Wayne Thompson, Center for Air Force History, 18 October 1995.</p> |
|--|--|
- 

**You're apt to get so tied up in administrative processes in peacetime that you forget exactly what you're in business for. The emphasis is on something else.**

—Gen Curtis E. LeMay

56. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN secretary-general, to Willie Claes, NATO secretary-general, letter, 26 July 1995.

57. Chap. 5.

58. Adm Leighton W. Smith Jr., CINCSOUTH, memorandum of understanding with Gen Bernard Janvier, commander, UNPROFOR, subject: NAC Decisions of 25 July and the Direction of the UN Secretary-General, 10 August 1995.

59. AIRSOUTH, Operation DELIBERATE FORCE Fact Sheet, n.d., 2.

60. For the study, see Col John R. Baker, deputy director of current operations, Headquarters USAF, "Report of Assistance

Visit to Operation DENY FLIGHT Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC), Vicenza, Italy, 24-30 July 1995."

61. CAOC organization charts exist in several documents collected by the BACS team. One easily accessible one, with names, is found in "USAFE's Response to the Balkans Crisis: A Brief History of Operations PROVIDE PROMISE and DENY FLIGHT," August 1995, AFHRA, BACS file CAOC-24, folder B-1b(2)-3.